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ABSTRACT

Findings from a study to identify changes in school board political values and school district policy as a result of change in school board members following community dissatisfaction are presented in this paper. The narrow objective was to analyze change in board members' political values and subsequent policy changes resulting from social change and political conflict in three geographically related school districts. The broad objective was a comparative analysis to relate policymakers' political value orientations to district policy implementation. Dissatisfaction theory (Iannaccone, and Lutz, 1970) and a policy taxonomy (Mitchell, Marshall, and Wirt, 1986) framed the methodology, which included document analysis of records from 1960-89, a survey of school board members' political values, and interviews with board members and district personnel. Findings indicate that increasing suburbanization contributed to community dissatisfaction with district policy, resulting in increased political participation and high school board turnover, which in turn led to change in the board's value structure. A conclusion is that policy change was a function of superintendent succession and school board realignment. Five tables are included. Appendices contain the survey form and five figures/charts illustrating statistical findings and policies implemented. (10 references) (LMI)

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SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VALUES AND SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

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SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VALUES AND SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

This study was designed to identify the changes in school board member political values and school district policy as a result of change in school board members following significant community dissatisfaction. As such, it had two objectives, one narrow and the other broad. The narrow objective described and analyzed change in the political values of the school board and school district policy which occurred as the result of social change and political conflict in three geographically-related school districts. The broad objective presented a comparative analysis which related the political value orientation of policy makers within a school district to the introduction and implementation of school district policy.

Theoretical Perspectives

Because this study linked political values and school district policy with political change in a school district two distinct theoretical frameworks guided the data collection and analysis. For purposes of understanding and analyzing the political and contextual events leading to policy change, Dissatisfaction Theory (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970) was employed.

For purposes of identifying and analyzing the value orientations and school district policy the policy taxonomy developed by Mitchell, Marshall and Wirt (1985, 1986) was employed. This taxonomy, developed for use at the state level and adapted for use at the local level, describes seven policy domains (Organization and Governance, Personnel, Program, Curriculum, Student Testing, Finance, and Facilities) and four political values (Efficiency, Equity, Quality, and Choice).

Research Methods

The study was conceptualized as a three phase design utilizing three distinct methodologies to identify the substantive policy changes and their representative political value orientation which occurred as a result of community dissatisfaction. Retrospective methodologies (Berg, 1989), associated with Dissatisfaction Theory, were utilized in the initial phase to gather data regarding social, economic, and political change over a twenty-five year period, 1960-1989. County and school district documents as well as those of selected state and private agencies were inspected in order to provide information on change in community values and citizen participation. Quantitative methodologies were employed in the second phase to gather information regarding school board member values, through administration of a political values survey (Mitchell, Marshall, & Wirt, 1986). Former and current school board members and superintendents were asked to respond to a short survey. Finally, traditional qualitative methods (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) were utilized to provide data relative to policy changes in the school districts. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with school board members and school district personnel.

Data Sources

Three suburban districts were selected which had recently experienced intense social and political conflict regarding school board member elections and similar changes in their socio-economic conditions. Two of the districts had experienced involuntary superintendent turnover between 1985 and 1986 (Johnson, 1988; Reed & Johnson- Howard, 1989) while the third had experienced superintendent turnover in 1979 with turnover of its entire school board through incumbent defeat between 1983-1985[1]. In addition the three districts were adjacent to one another, contained at least one high school, and were classified as suburban.

For purposes of confidentiality pseudonyms were used for names of schools, school districts, and geographical locations as well as participants. The three districts will be referred to as Riverton, Leafy Rivers, and Willow Springs.

Limitations

There were three limitations in this study. The first was that the fundamental social values were pre-selected from the taxonomy developed by Mitchell, Marshall, and Wirt (1986) rather than being identified by the school board members. A second limitation was that direct assessment of the community value orientation through interviews or surveys were not conducted. Instead it was assumed that community values were represented on the school board. Finally, generalizations must be made with caution since only three districts were included in this study.

Significance

It is expected that this study will extend knowledge of the Dissatisfaction Theory (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1971) research in the area of policy changes following shifts in the value orientation of school board members as a result of community dissatisfaction. This study provided knowledge regarding the usefulness at the local level of the policy taxonomy developed by Mitchell, Marshall, and Wirt (1985). A third outcome of this study was its direct application to the current practice of educational administration.

The Setting

Riverton, Leafy Rivers, and Willow Springs represent a contiguous geographical area of approximately 220 square miles. The region is bounded by foothills to the north, the state line to the east, a large metropolitan city to the west, and rolling wheat fields to the south. This region, known as the valley is intersected by an interstate highway, two railroad lines, and a river.

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[1] Originally it was believed that the superintendent in this district had survived the political conflict or was about to be replaced. Ultimately it was revealed that the current superintendent had been the outside replacement, coming to the district in 1979.

Located within the boundaries are one of the nation's largest industrial parks and aluminum mills, as well as a paper mill.

The county within which these districts lie, is the fourth most populated county in the state, with one fourth of the population residing within the three districts. All of the districts are characterized as "bedroom communities" because of the large number of suburban developments which house much the region's work force.

All of the districts contain portions of the unincorporated county. Each district has one or more towns located within its boundaries, some with their own post office and town name, different than that of the district. Leafy Rivers is the only one of the three districts to have an incorporated township within its boundaries. This township, of about 1,700 people, has its own municipal government with elected officials.

Socio-economic and Political Change

Dissatisfaction Theory was first described by Iannaccone and Lutz in 1970 and later elaborated by Lutz and Iannaccone in 1978. It provides a framework to describe and analyze a political process which leads to substantive policy change in school districts, as well as the contextual events which influence that process. It should be noted that the name of the theory, Dissatisfaction, arose from the dissatisfaction experienced by citizenry when their value system is no longer compatible with that of public policy. Four major factors are, each acting as a catalyst to the other, comprise a causal chain (Reed, 1985): (1) Change in community values, which leads to; (2) change in political participation, which leads to; (3) change in school board member values, which leads to; (4) change in school district policy values. These four factors, and their contextual relationships, are used to analyze the socio-political events in the Valley Region.

CHANGE IN COMMUNITY VALUES

Change in community values occurs over a long period of time as population changes take place within the community. This may take as long as twenty years as the community shifts from rural to suburban status (Iannaccone and Lutz, 1971). Rural communities become suburban communities as housing developments cover large sections of land previously under cultivation and business, commercial, and industrial parks develop in areas adjacent to a metropolis because land is low-cost and available. These changes bring new populations, destroying the homogeneity that once characterized these school districts. Whether the population increases or declines; the result of the growth is the loss of previous commonly shared values and the emergence of new dominant values.

Retrospective review of county and school district records is required to evaluate demographic changes in assessed property valuation and average attendance (Lutz & Garberina, 1977; LeDoux & Burlingame, 1971; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970; Walden, 1966; Kirkendall, 1966). The progression of economic development leading to demographic changes was evident in the retrospective review of each district's Preliminary Official Statements, documents prepared as prospectus' for the sale of bonds. Indicators of change in community values which were analyzed include: (1) student enrollment records; (2) property valuation; and (3) a history of economic development.

Average Daily Enrollment: All three school districts experienced change in student enrollment, either in terms of increase, decrease, or both. Appendix A contains a graphic

comparison of student enrollments among the three districts between 1965-66 and 1989-90. Riverton has remained the largest of the three districts, while Leafy Rivers became the district with the lowest student enrollment. Both Riverton's and Leafy Rivers' student enrollments experienced rapid growth followed by dramatic decreases causing them to consider school closures. Only Willow Springs continued to incline at about 3% per year until it more than doubled by 1989. During the twenty-five years between 1965 and 1990, Willow Springs and Riverton had net gains of 1900 FTE (100%) and 2500 FTE (35%), respectively, while Leafy Rivers lost 800 FTE (22%) of its earlier student enrollment.

Assessed Valuation: Assessed valuation in all three districts increased dramatically during the time period from 1965 to 1989. Appendix A contains a comparison of the Annual Assessed Property Valuation for the same time period. In 1965 all three districts were similar in assessed valuation, calculated at 25 percent of the true value[2], with no more than $10,000 variation among them. When those figures are corrected to 100% of market value the variation is greater, ranging from $60 million in Leafy Rivers to $106 million in Riverton. By 1989, business, industry, and housing, as well as inflation, had assisted in escalating the property assessments close to 1,000% in Riverton (11.3 billion) and Willow Springs ($638.1 million). The growth in Leafy Rivers was not as dramatic but was certainly respectable at 572% or $483.7 million.

Economic Development: Economic development affects community values by attracting people with the promise of employment thereby bringing newcomers to the community. Until the mid-1970's the region's economy had been resource-based, being tied to agriculture, forestry, and mining. In 1965 the major industries were a paper mill and railroad in Leafy Rivers, the shopping mall and groceries in Riverton, and the industrial park and aluminum mill in Willow Springs.

The Valley region experienced dramatic change during the later half of the twentieth century. In 1950 each district had relatively large rural areas devoted to ranches and orchards as well as to small businesses. The townships closest to the city had business districts which provided the banking and merchandising for the communities. Only Leafy Rivers had an industrial base, the paper mill, that had been in existence for some twenty years. Although the industry was resource-based (wood products), it provided an economic base that was independent of agriculture, setting it apart from the other areas.

Two events contributed to the expansion in manufacturing and light industry which began in the 1960's. First, the availability of large tracts of low cost land attracted large tracts of land that had been devoted to agriculture was available at low-cost as farmers and orchardists were no longer able to compete. An example of this can be seen in Willow Springs where the number of self-supporting farms decreased from more than a 1000 to less than 100. Secondly, a naval supply station, located adjacent to the aluminum mill, was converted to a 4,000,000 square foot industrial park. High occupancy has fueled plans to add 3,500,000 square foot of additional space. By 1986 the Valley region housed 70% of the manufacturing in the metropolitan area.

In the 1990's one can only see remnants of a time when there were separate communities

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[2] The percentages of the true value at which property was assessed changed during the time period under study. Beginning in 1975, the basis of the assessed valuation was established at 100% of true value. For the years 1971 through 1974, the basis was 50% of true market value; in 1970 and prior years, assessed valuation was approximately 25% of true.

in this region. Only the names of the elementary schools proclaim the names of the communities they once served. Urban sprawl has consumed large sections of the Riverton and Leafy Rivers districts. The orchards and farm lands have given way to housing developments; only a small percentage of the land is still under cultivation. Older homes, that had been the elite are now rentals or, if located close to arterials, have been razed, or converted, to make way for new business. Numerous industrial and commercial parks have developed, as well as shopping centers and malls.

Significant demographic change indicated change in the value structure of the community. Although value orientation of the community was not specifically evaluated, it is assumed that the changing demographics represented a changing value orientation. In short, the former value structure eroded and a new one emerged. Assuming that the school board had not changed, the stage was set for intense conflict in the political arena.

CHANGE IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Change in citizen political participation, the second link in the causal chain, follows change in community values. When community members become dissatisfied with the policy-making body of school district they use the election process to create change (Iannaccone, 1987; Danis, 1985; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970). Changes in political participation can be documented through examination of political records of school board member elections. Indicators of change employed to assess an increase political activity include: (1) the number of challengers running for director positions (Lutz & Wang, 1987; Mitchell & Thorsted, 1976); (2) the number of contested positions; and (3) the number of appointment-resignations. An index of political conflict, the DISSAT, was also calculated.

Political Indicators: School board elections between 1965 and the early to mid- 1970's were characterized as quiescent with relatively low conflict. Consistent with a population that is comfortable with its representation, the Valley Region had few contested elections, few resignation-appointments, and no primary elections[3]. Non- incumbent candidates, or challengers, were present but not in large numbers, and many ran as single candidates for a position. Contested positions were the exception rather than the norm; only nine positions were contested during this twelve year period among the three districts. There was also little turnover through the resignation-appointment process. Evidence of how satisfied the electorate was can be seen in two of the districts, Riverton in 1969 and Leafy Rivers in 1973. At that time re-districting resulted incumbents who no longer resided in the director district they represented. However in each district the incumbent was elected to represent the new director district in which he lived.

Following 1973 were a series of elections characterized by political instability. This comparative change can be seen in Table 1. Electoral conflict was manifest in Riverton in 1973 and in all districts by 1977 and continued through 1987. During the latter time period, each district more than doubled the number of challengers, with Leafy Rivers having 26 challengers, more than quadruple the number during quiescence. Contested positions doubled or tripled in all districts, and the number of resignation-appointments also increased.

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[3] A primary election is held when there are more than two candidates for a position.

Table 1. Comparative Summary of Political Events Between 1965-1989

Districts	Riverton		Willow Springs		Leafy Rivers	
Political Events	1965-72	1973-87	1965-76	1977-87	1965-76	1977-87
-appointments	1	6	2	5	1	3
-challengers	2	15	4	12	6	26
-contested elections	2	5	3	9	3	9

The highwater mark of conflict occurred in the 1977 elections when fifteen challengers and four incumbents filed for eight positions. Primaries were required in Leafy Rivers and Riverton when the number of challengers exceeded the maximum of two candidates for general elections. This political instability[4] was sustained for fourteen years and did not subside until the late 1980's.

Conflict Index: In an attempt to quantify community dissatisfaction conflict indexes have been developed (Lutz & Wang, 1987; Lutz & Hunt, 1987; Mitchell & Thirsted, 1976; Minar, 1966). These indexes use combinations of the political participation data (e.g., votes cast, number of candidates, number of seats being filled, etc.) to set up algorithms which demonstrate the conflict arithmetically. Although a number of indexes have been developed, the only one reported here is the DISSAT.

The DISSAT formula is the ratio of the number of seats available to the number of candidates (incumbents and challengers) subtracted from 1. The DISSAT is based on the assumption that candidates choose to run when they sense political support rather than the assumption that involvement depends on citizen dissatisfaction. An example supporting the validity of this assumption occurred in Riverton's 1983 election for position #3, where the new candidate ran to "force [the incumbent] to make some promises" for which he could be held accountable; in that instance the incumbent chose not to run and the new candidate was unchallenged.

The DISSAT never exceeded 0.66 in any of the three districts, indicating an average of three candidates per position (See Table 2). All districts experienced conflict episodes during the late 1970's and again in the mid-1980's[5] when index values were .33 or above for at least two consecutive elections. Each episode represented turnover of all five school board members, except in one case in Riverton during the mid-80's when four of the five school board members turned over. Two conflict episodes occurred in Leafy Rivers, in 1977, when all incumbents resigned, and again in the 1983 and 1985 elections, when all school board members were

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[4] There was a slight increase in electoral conflict in the 1973 election, however, the Public Disclosure law was passed in 1973 which may account for the increase in candidates across the three districts. All incumbents resigned in Riverton, while one resigned in Leafy Rivers and two resigned in Willow Springs. The year 1977 was selected since there was no continuation of the conflict in 1975 election.

[5] This one case occurred in Riverton in the mid-1980's when four of the five school board members turned over.

Table 2. DISSAT Conflict Index Values for Election Years between 1965- 1989

Election Year	Riverton	Willow Springs	Leafy Rivers	Valley Region
1965	0.33	0.25	0.40	0.33
1967	0.25	0.00	0.50	0.25
1969	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.07
1971	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1973	0.33	0.33	0.25	0.30
1975	0.00	0.33	0.33	0.22
1977	0.50	0.40	0.72	0.54
1979	0.43	0.33	0.60	0.45
1981	0.00	0.45	0.40	0.28
1983	0.50	0.00	0.63	0.38
1985	0.00	0.50	0.64	0.38
1987	0.57	0.50	0.40	0.49
1989	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.08

were replaced. Riverton had four occurrences, the 1973 election, when all incumbents resigned; the 1977 and 1979 elections, when primaries were held; the 1983 election, when two incumbents resigned; and the 1987 election, when one incumbent resigned. Willow Springs had only two conflict episodes, the first in 1981, when every position was open[6], and the second in the 1985 and 1987 elections, when the entire school board turned over and two incumbents were defeated.

Riverton presents an interesting phenomenon where conflict seemed to "skip" an election. This is seen in two instances in Riverton, the 1981 and 1985 elections, and may reflect community satisfaction with those particular board members. For example, in 1981 one of the incumbent board members had been appointed to the board for a second time having been defeated in the prior election and another had defeated the previous incumbent in the 1977 election.

CHANGE IN SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VALUES

Change in school board member values, the third link in the causal chain, follows change in commun participation. The politicization of school board member elections by the community leads to change in sch values. The effect of increased political activity by dissatisfied citizens is the replacement of incumbent valu new value representation, through incumbent defeat. Indicators of change in school board values which are (1) increase in the rate of turnover in school boardmembers through appointment or incumbent defeat; (2) ch composition of the school board; (3) change in the socio-economic status of the school board; and (4) chang value orientation of the school board.

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[6] This election was preceded by three elections which included one more candidate than number of open positions. This election also marked the end of a cycle, beginning in 1977 and ending in 1981, where each school board position was replaced.

New Board Members: The community of the Valley Region had changed, and the community had b volatile as the citizens sought to make the new dominant values manifest in school district policy. The effec conflict was a concomitant increase in the turnover of school board members as the community exercised the prerogatives as can be seen in Table 3. New board members (replacements) could come to the school board incumbents were defeated or through appointment as incumbents retired or resigned.

Table 3. Summary of Turnover in School Board Members from 1965-1987

	Riverton		Willow Springs		Leafy Rivers	
Political Events	1965-72	1973-87	1965-76	1977-87	1965-76	1977-87
New board members	4	14	6	10	6	19
Appointment	1	6	2	5	1	3
Incumbent defeats*	0	2	0	3	0	2

* = defeat occurred at the polls

The number of new board members per year increased in all three districts beginning in the mid to late 1970's. These increases fell in close proximity to the conflict period discussed in the previous section. The exact dates and numbers can be seen in Appendix B. School board turnover increased from one incumbent being replaced every two years from 1965-76 to three incumbents being replaced every two years between 1977 and 1987.

The highest frequency of new board members, occurred in Riverton (1974-79) and in Willow Springs (1983-86) with each district experiencing seven new members in a four- year period. Leafy Rivers had a bi-modal distribution with six new board members during the 1977-80 election cycle and five new members during the 1983-86 cycle. The greatest number of new board members in one year was in Leafy Rivers in 1977 when all three incumbents retired and three new members were elected. In Willow Springs between 1977-1982 there were six new board members, and between 1985-87 there were five new members with three new board members followed by two resignations. Riverton had the longest period of continuous school board member change, from 1973 to 1979 five new board members were appointed or elected every four years.

Incumbent Defeat: School board member incumbent defeats indicate that the community is dissatisfied with the status quo. Incumbent defeats can occur at the polls, or an incumbent defeat can occur when an incumbent chooses not to run because of a belief that support is insufficient to be re-elected (Lutz and Wang, 1987). Incumbent retirements were classed as incumbent defeats when the position was contested or all incumbents resigned. When a non-incumbent candidate ran unopposed, no incumbent defeat was identified.

The number of incumbent defeats by district for the 25 year period can be seen in Table 4. Between 1973-1987, 22 incumbent defeats were identified, representing 31% of the 70 positions open for election among the three districts during that time. Seven of these defeats occurred at the polls, the others were recorded as retirement-defeats. Ten incumbent defeats were identified during the 1977-79 election cycle, the highest frequency during any election cycle. Four of those defeats occurred at the polls and were shared between Willow Springs and Riverton.

The number of defeats among the districts during the 14 year period ranged from six to eight defeats. Although all districts had approximately the same total number of incumbent defeats, Willow Springs had twice as many (four) electoral defeats as the other two districts and fewer defeats (two) which occurred through retirement. Although Riverton district experienced seven incumbent defeats,

Table 4. Incumbent Defeats for Each Election 1965-88

Year	Riverton	Willow Springs	Leafy Rivers
1965	0	1 (R)	0
1967	1 (R)	0	1 (R)
1969	0	0	0
1971	0	0	0
1973	2 (SS)	1 (R)	0
1975	0	0	0
1977	2 (*,R)	2 (**)	3 (SSS)
1978	1 (*)	0	2 (SS)
1981	0	1 (R)	1 (*)
1983	2 (*,R)	0	1 (R)
1985	2 (RR)	2 (**)	1 (*)
1987	1 (R)	0	1 (R)
1989	0	0	0

* = incumbent defeat at the polls
S = simultaneous retirements of all incumbents
R = incumbent resignation with contested election

two of which occurred at the polls, it was commonly held that school board elections were low conflict and "pretty calm." It appears that either the incumbents in Willow Springs misread their support, or they chose to ignore it. This supports previous research findings (Burlingame, 1988) that higher socio-economic districts, such as Riverton, are better able to manage conflict than low socio-economic districts.[7]

Gender Makeup: If school boards are representative of their communities and the core values of these communities change over time, then the change in values should become evident in the socio-economic make-up of the school board. This can be evaluated through the board composition in terms of gender and career status at any given point in time. Gender make-up of the school board is also noteworthy since, traditionally, the majority of positions have been held by men rather than women.

In the span of twenty-four years the school board composition in the three districts has changed from no female members to almost half its membership being female. Prior to consolidation in 1965, the only women who had served on the three school boards were typically farmer's wives. Women disappeared from the boards during the 1960's when the districts enlarged because it was "thought that women could not understand the finances. That job needed to be done by businessmen."

By 1977 three women had been elected or appointed to two of the boards; four years later, in 1981 there were five women board members among the three boards. A total of 14 women have occupied positions on the Valley school boards during the twenty-four years between 1965 and 1990. Currently, seven of the fifteen, among the three districts are occupied by women with each district having at least two female members.

The professional orientation of these women bears closer examination, as well. In

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[7] One defeated incumbent in Riverton volunteered as a building aide following the election in which she lost. She reported that she never felt any repercussions from her defeat even though the teachers had backed the winning candidate.

general, the first women, appointed or elected, were homemakers whose husbands were professionals, or were connected to education in some manner. This was true in 1973 and remained so until 1985, when the first woman with a career outside of the home was elected in Leafy Rivers. Today the woman board member who does not have an outside career is the anomaly rather than the norm. Only one woman of the seven currently in office has no career, and three of the seven hold positions in high status professions (i.e., attorney, or school administrator).

Socio-economic Status: The careers represented on the 1965 school boards are not the same as represented on the 1988 school boards. In 1965, the school boards of Riverton and Leafy Rivers were composed of businessmen or professionals, who were attorneys, accountants, or doctors. The businessmen represented executive-levels from the industries or manufacturing plants located in the Valley. The membership of these boards was upper and middle class and tended to be the civic-minded citizen. Representation of the blue-collar worker was non-existent until 1977, when a fireman was elected to the Leafy Rivers school board. Today these school boards reflect a diversified cross-section of their community. Realtors, firemen, school administrators, doctors, attorneys, and small business owners make-up the school boards of 1990. No longer is the business executive represented.

Willow Springs also experienced changes in the career-orientation of its school board. The school board of 1965 had long-standing family ties to community, many of whom continue to reside in the area. Of the five board members, three were farmers, while a fourth member came from a farming family but taught in a neighboring district. Only one member owned a business, a very prosperous salvage company. Board values began to change in 1977 when two professionally-oriented men were, one was an attorney, while the other was in mid-management for a national insurance agency. Both were relatively new to the area, having moved to the community from outside the state. Both had been active in political party campaigns prior to their candidacy. It is important to note that they defeated two incumbent board members at the poll. They set the tone for a "new" school board; the next few years saw two bankers, a young computer operator, and a housewife become Willow Springs board members. Today two realtors, an auctioneer, and early childhood educators comprise the school board. Although some members still have long-term ties to the community, farming is no longer represented on the school board.

Political Values: Mitchell, Marshall, and Wirt (1986) suggest that there are four basic social values which operate among policy makers to shape policy at the state level: Efficiency, Equity, Quality, and Choice. A brief description of each value and it policy implication precedes the analysis of the results of the surveyed political values. Large sections of the following discussions have been taken from Marshall, et al, 1989; Mitchell, et al, 1986; and Mitchell & Encarnation, 1984. Their model provided the framework for data collection and its analysis regarding the value orientation of school board members.

Efficiency gained a stronghold during the 1920's when Taylor's scientific management theory crossed the business sector and invaded educational thought and practice (Callahan, 1962). Regulations for school operations and cost-effectiveness were the by-words of the era and dominated discussions on educational policy. Policy decisions driven by the core value of efficiency favor a centralized system which addresses cost effectiveness, efficient management, and improving the use of the tax dollar.

Equity emerged as an educational policy when civil rights issues began to escalate in the 1950's equity (Mitchell & Encarnation, 1984). These decisions forced significant policy change

on the part of school districts. A bi-furcated approach was adopted in which one system provided an equal opportunity to all children, while the other provided additional resources to disadvantaged populations in order to achieve equity. Many programs were initiated at the federal level to assist communities and schools in meeting their responsibilities. Headstart began in this manner as did remedial programs like Chapter 1, and the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act of 1975.

Quality became a primary driver of educational policy decisions during the late 1950's and 1960's and took a backseat to equity goals during the 1970's. Again in the 1980's quality has become a focus for educational decisions as national attention has been focused on providing maximum educational opportunities to its youth following the release of the Carnegie Report (1984) and "A Nation at Risk Report" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Choice was evident in the policies adopted to create a greater number of options in educational programs and flexibility. These include voucher systems, alternative education programs, open enrollment, opportunities for home schooling, flexibility in local planning, and increased decentralization of fiscal and management decisions.

Value Shift: A survey instrument, designed by Mitchell et al. for use at the state level, was used to assess the political value orientation of former and present school board members and superintendents in the three districts. The survey was designed as a semantic differential with eighteen items presented as pairs of four competing political values (efficiency, equity, quality, and choice) for three broad policy areas (program, governance, and finance). (See Appendix C.) The arrangement was such that there were six forced choice items for every policy area using the four competing value statements.

Analysis of the results of the survey revealed several characteristics regarding the value orientation of the school boards. First, the values did shift following political conflict and school board member turnover. As can be seen in Table 5, the values shifted in each of the policy areas, some more substantially than others, with financial- efficiency selections remaining constant at both time periods. There was also a shift in the values that the districts selected against. Choice remained a value that was frequently selected against, especially in the area of Finance. For example, in the area of finance Willow Springs moved from selecting against Quality (Increasing the level of funding) to selecting against Choice (Decentralization of resources).[8] This type of change was also evident in Riverton where the 1972 board selected against Choice, while the 1988 board selected against Equity.

Secondly, there was a general trend toward Quality and away from Efficiency, however there did appear to be domain-specific values. The boards appeared to move from a predominant Efficiency orientation toward one of Quality. In the post-conflict boards, Quality was the most frequently selected value, being selected five times across all districts, while Efficiency was selected the least, being selected once. This opposes the Pre-conflict boards where Efficiency was the most frequently selected value. Quality was selected by all post-conflict boards in the policy area of governance; while Willow Springs selected Quality in the area of program and Riverton selected Quality in the area of Finance.

Although Choice appears to be emerging as a selected value in the 1988 board, it only occurs in the policy area of program (increasing program flexibility). In both Leafy Rivers and

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[8] As noted in the previous chapter, the Levy Lid Law was not enacted until 1977, there fore any increase in funding for education would translate into a tax increase. Willow Springs was a rural district, with strong low tax ideology.

Table 5. Value Orientation of the Valley School Boards

Policy Domain	1972 School Board	Insurgent	1988 School Board
Riverton			
Program	Quality	Equity NOT Efficiency	Choice/Equity NOT Efficiency
Finance	Efficiency NOT Choice	Equity NOT Choice	Quality NOT Equity
Governance	Efficiency NOT Equity	Equity	Quality
Willow Springs			
Program	Quality	Quality NOT Equity	Equity NOT Efficiency
Finance	Efficiency/Equity NOT Quality	Efficiency NOT Equity	Efficiency NOT Choice
Governance	Efficiency NOT Choice	Quality NOT Choice	Quality NOT Choice
Leafy Rivers			
Program	Choice NOT Efficiency	Quality	Choice/Equity NOT Efficiency
Finance	NOT Choice	Efficiency NOT Choice	Efficiency NOT Choice
Governance	Equity	Efficiency NOT Quality	Quality

Riverton, Choice was selected with Equity, making both of them weak in the strength of the political value preference of the school board. It was also a strong program value in Leafy Rivers in 1972; although its stronghold has lessened.

Insurgents: During analysis of the value orientation of the school boards, a third group of individuals emerged whose value orientation was also different than that of either the pre- or the post-conflict school boards. These individuals were known as insurgents. Their value orientation is identified in the middle column; this is not a board from a particular year but is a group of individuals comprised of the first set of individuals to defeat incumbent board members for each district. All persons identified as insurgents had prior experience as professional educators and or politicians.

Insurgents appeared to have played a critical role in beginning the process of value shifts. Elected as front-runners, they shared personal characteristics of "confrontiveness". Other board members described these individuals as "confrontive", and "sure of themselves". There were indications that once insurgents were elected, board meetings were unpleasant with more open conflict. It was also reported that these individuals opposed the superintendent's in their districts and "were out to get him".

These individuals also appeared to have trust issues with school district administration and often believed they did not receive adequate information to make "good decisions". One insurgent voiced a need to call others in the community for more information. In Willow Springs two insurgents put together a plan to create "standing committees" in five areas of district operations to ensure that the board had information independent of that provided by the school district. One of the insurgents responsible for that plan stated, "If board members aren't restricted to people from the administration, it will ensure a better flow of information."

The conflict these individuals created appeared to have impacted the consensus building process of the new board member. (See Appendix D.) The pre-conflict board and the post-conflict board were able to achieve consensus in value orientation. In other words, they shared similar beliefs relative to the operationalizing of values in policy. This was not possible with the insurgent-dominated school boards. The insurgent role may have been critical to force change on the board to realign school district policy with that of the dominant value structure of the community.

As pivotal a role as the insurgents play it is also critical that they are forced to leave the board. The value shift did not appear to be complete until these people were removed from the school board. The defeat of these people at the poll was the second set of incumbent defeats that occurred in each district. The new board members that were elected represented the new values and were also able to build consensus.

Change in school board values results as increasing political conflict caused turnover in the incumbent school board membership. Value shift can be identified through high rates of turnover, both through appointment and incumbent defeat. Value shift is also evident as the socio-economic status and gender make-up of the board changes. Insurgents are elected as the change agents and begin the process of value realignment. Value shift, however is not complete until the insurgents leave the school board.

CHANGE IN SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY

Change in school district policy, the fourth and final link in the causal chain, follows change in the values of the school board membership. When the value orientation of the school board shifts, initially through the election of insurgents, the stage is set for substantial changes in school policy. The intent of the changes is to bring district policy into alignment with the values of the community. Often the first major policy decision is the replacement of the superintendent with an "outsider" who is given a mandate by the school board. This is followed by other changes in many areas of policy.

Involuntary Turnover: Each district experienced involuntary turnover as a result of change in school board member values. Four characteristics identified superintendent turnover as involuntary. The first is that in all cases superintendent succession occurred subsequent to one or more incumbent defeats. Secondly, there was evidence that all former superintendents left their districts following negative evaluations of the school board. In Willow Springs the turnover occurred in 1979, within two years of a two incumbent defeats, while in Leafy Rivers and Riverton the turnover occurred after a series of incumbent defeat elections. A third characteristic was that all successor superintendents were appointed from outside the system; age and education levels o the new appointees was also different. Finally, all successor superintendents received a mandate for change.

The most extreme of involuntary turnover occurred in Leafy Rivers when the school board voted not to extend the superintendent's contract by one year, just six months short of his retirement date. The ensuing conflict resulted in an unsuccessful attempt to recall three board members. The new appointee who was in his late 30's, came from across the state with prior experience as a superintendent. His mandate was to consolidate the two junior high schools and close an elementary building to manage the declining enrollment, and to reassign administrative personnel.

Similar events occurred in Riverton and Willow Springs when the superintendent retired with two years remaining on his contract, following a non-renewal vote by the school board.

According to one school board member, "He knew it was time to go, we all did." New superintendents were hired, both with doctorates in education, and previous experience in central office. Both had come from out of state, one more recently than the other. The mandate the Willow Springs superintendent received was for academic excellence, while in Riverton the mandate was to manage the declining enrollment through school closures and to eliminate the nepotism that characterized personnel practices throughout the district.

Policy Change: Each district not only experienced involuntary turnover, but each district also experienced substantial changes in policy in all areas of school district operations. Policy domains identified by Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt (1989) provided a vehicle to track the policy changes in a comprehensive and systematic manner, while the political values provided a means to assess the intent. The policy domains and their operational definitions are (1) Organization and Governance, the assignment of authority and responsibility within the system; (2) Personnel, conditions of getting or keeping positions within the system; (3) Program, ; (4) Finance, ; (5) Curriculum, ; (6) Student Testing, and ; (7) Facilities.

Values are at the heart of policy decisions, influencing the course of action to be taken (Beyer, 1980). For this reason policy changes were identified by the values they represented using the same four political values employed in the earlier section on school board member values. The following definitions were utilized: (1) Efficiency related to conditions of economy; (2) Quality addressed setting high standards, increasing accountability, and heightening awareness of best practice; (3) Equity referred to equalizing resource distribution, broadening participation, or equalizing educational opportunity; (4) Choice, related to concepts of flexibility, provision of options, or reduction of restrictions.

Extensive policy changes occurred in all domains following involuntary superintendent turnover and outside succession. (See Appendix E.) A major policy change occurred in Organization which was strongly oriented toward Quality-Efficiency because the intent was to create a more efficient-effective management structure. This was consistent with the value orientation selected by post-conflict school boards in the area of governance. Reasons frequently given related to "flattening the administrative structure" or a lack of "effectiveness" of the previous structure. In Leafy Rivers, for example, the superintendent reassigned all administrators and all elementary teachers as well. Areas of responsibility were also reassigned as occurred in Riverton with the two assistant superintendents. Other changes reflective if Quality was an increased interest in the area of staff development as a means to link curriculum, program, and organizational goals. All districts formed staff development councils whose function was to develop an umbrella plan for the district to encourage organizational development.

Other changes in Governance included decentralization of decision making and establishment of community goal-setting processes. Both of these changes were based in Equity because of the intent to broaden input for decisions. These changes were also consistent with increasing responsiveness to the community.

Changes in Personnel policy reflected values of Quality. Many of the changes in Personnel were related to changes in Governance, making the value orientation consistent with that chosen by the post-conflict board. Accountability was strongly emphasized as a change in evaluation. An example can be seen in Willow Springs where one board member reported, "Some people need to improve or be gotten rid of. Do it through the union. Do it right. We need to have more school districts like that. Every school board member feels that way." Expansion of opportunities for profession development was a second change in Personnel which

was based in Quality.

Two other changes in Personnel were not related to Quality. Hiring of new personnel became a team function rather than the responsibility of a single individual, which reflected Equity values consistent with decentralization of decision-making. All districts began to expand the number of individuals involved and might include community members as well as teachers on hiring committees. A significant change, based in Choice, was the development of collegial negotiations. This created flexibility in the development of contracted agreements because it opened the lines of communication.

In the domain of Program most policy changes were based in Choice. Many new programs were developed under the new superintendents and post-conflict boards that emphasized variety and flexibility. The changes in this area focused much regional attention on these districts. Alternative elementary programs were developed which focused on increased levels of parent involvement in two of the districts. Two of the districts developed middle school programs which are more flexible in meeting the needs of transescent youth. One policy change occurred that is of special note because it reflects values of both Equity and Choice. Because of a concern for low-performing students, all districts developed a variety of programs which allowed more flexibility in meeting student needs. The Contract-based education programs, a cooperative effort among all three districts, is an example of such a program.

Policy changes in the domain of Finance included decentralization of funding decisions which appears to reflect Equity values and development of building-based management strategies which would increase flexibility in spending decisions. This is not consistent with the values of Quality and Efficiency selected by the post-conflict boards. It is the only policy area where practice did not appear to be consistent with state value preference. It may be that Efficiency and Quality values were met when the new practices were demonstrated as "cost-effective". Several building administrators reported that the bottom line dollar figure in their building had not changed, just who decided how to spend it.

Policy changes in Curriculum appeared to be based in Quality because of an emphasis in "best practice". One change was in increasing the development of Curriculum adoption cycles and the increased allocation of resources to curriculum review, adoption, and staff training.

All districts dropped standardized testing programs that were not state-mandated and began looking to develop curriculum-based assessment programs. The move to drop unnecessary standardized testing was perceived as an Efficiency-Quality decision since the test results were not used to make program decisions. The move to CBA programs would increase flexibility, a Choice value, and would provide more meaningful data to evaluate the program, an accountability (Quality) issue.

Three major changes were noted in the policy domain of Facilities. The first was that all districts passed major building bonds within two years of involuntary turnover and realignment of the school board. In Leafy Rivers it was the first major building bond in 30 years. What is surprising is that these bonds were passed in spite of conditions of declining enrollment in two of the districts. This provided new capacity and long range building plans were developed which increased the district's flexibility. Finally all districts developed a plan for preventative maintenance which reflecting concerns for Quality and Efficiency. This came about because the districts found themselves facing very expensive repairs as a result of delayed expenditure on maintenance items.

A significant finding in this study was the dependency of policy change on the realignment of the school board as well as involuntary superintendent turnover. In other words,

Change in the policy of school district operations is a function of involuntary turnover of superintendents and the realignment of school board members, and the value orientation of the school board. In Willow Springs the policy did not change substantially until the insurgents were defeated in 1985, although the involuntary turnover occurred in 1979. In Riverton and Leafy Rivers the insurgents had either been replaced or no longer dominated the school board by the time the new superintendents were appointed. Because those who initiate the process (insurgents) are not the same individuals who end it, the timing of superintendent turnover is critical for the implementation of policy. If the superintendent is replaced too early in the realignment process an insurgent- dominated school board will inhibit the ability of the superintendent to implement innovation in the replace the superintendent through involuntary turnover.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to document a chain of political and contextual events which led to policy changes in three geographically related school districts. The second purpose was to identify and analyze the political value orientation of the policy makers as the school board was realigned. The third was to identify and classify the school districts policies which were implemented following the realignment of the school board by educational domain and value orientation.

The analysis has shown that the dominant values of the
of the three communities did change prior to the time of the new superintendents appointments. New business, industry and commerce had expanded the economic base of the region and new families had been attracted to the area transforming the community from rural to suburban. Increasing suburbanization of the communities led to community dissatisfaction as the "new" community no longer felt that their values were represented through school district policy. Rising conflict and increased political participation brought about incumbent defeats and subsequent change in the value orientation of the school board. Following realignment of school board values and superintendent turnover, school district policy was changed.

Increased political participation resulted as the community sought to make its values manifest in school district policy. The cumulative effect of increased political participation (increased challengers, increasing incumbent retirements, numbers of appointees) through several election periods forced change in the school board values. Ultimately the increased conflict resulted in incumbent defeats which began the process of value realignment.

School board member turnover increased as the community sought to change the represented value structure of the school board. Whole school boards turned over within short periods. A series of incumbent defeats occurred, over a period of at several election periods, as the community sought to realign the value structure of the school board. Change in the value structure became evident as the careers represented on the school board began to reflect the changes occurring in the community at large. Increasing numbers of women also occupied board positions.

Insurgents were elected as "front-runners" in the alignment process. With prior political experience, they were able to access the system; with a rhetoric of "distrust" of the incumbent governing board, they are elected to make change. Insurgent domination, coupled with rapid turnover, inhibited consensus building, opened the system, and paved the way for new values to emerge in policy. Although playing a critical role in the realignment process, the insurgent had

to be replaced on the school board before values could be realigned.

The effect of the conflict-ridden turnover in school board members was change in the value structure. The political values of the school board members shifted from the earlier board, which represented the old guard incumbents, and the new school board, which emerged after the political conflict. Generally, political values shifted from a strong Efficiency orientation in the early 1970's to those of Quality and Choice in the 1980's. Agreement could also be found in the negative sense, when the board agreed "against" a value. The transition from one dominant value to the other was not a straight line; insurgents held a different orientation than either the "old" or the "new" board and yet some of the same values as well.

Policy change was a function of superintendent succession and school board realignment. Insurgent domination retarded policy realignment with community values. Once the insurgents were no longer on the board substantial policy changes were enacted. Values represented by the policy changes were consistent with value preference of the post-conflict board.

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Figure 1. Comparison of the Average Student Enrollment

Figure 1 . Comparison of the Average Student Enrollment

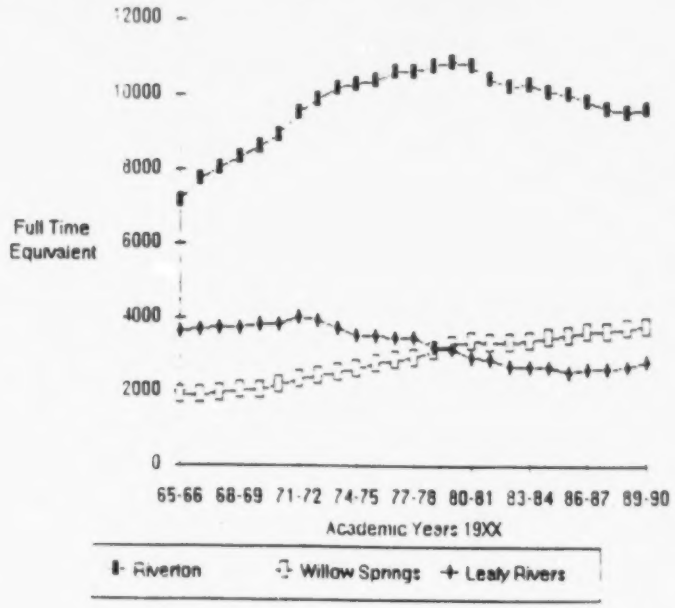
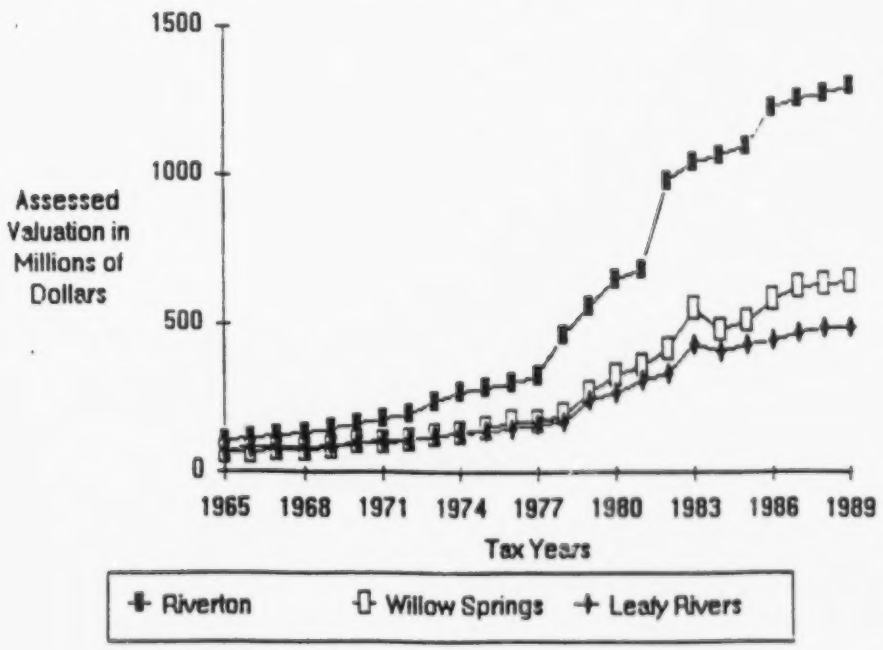


Figure 2. Comparison of the Annual Assessed Property Valuation - Corrected to 100% of Market Value



APPENDIX B

Comparison of School Board Turnover by Year

Year	Riverton	Willow Springs	Leafy Rivers	Region Total
1965	0	1	2	3
1966	1 @	0	0	1
1967	1 @	1	1	3
1968	0	1 @	0	1
1969	0	0	1	1
1970	0	1 @	0	1
1971	1	0	0	1
1972	0	1 @	0	1
1973	2 **	1	1	4
1974	1 @	0	1 @	2
1975	1	0	0	1
1976	1 @	0	0	1
1977	2 *	2 **	3 ***	7
1978	2 @@	1 @	0	3
1979	1 *	0	2 **	3
1980	1 @	2 @@	1 @	4
1981	0	1 *	2 *	3
1982	1 @	0	0	1
1983	2	0	2	4
1984	0	0	0	0
1985	0	3 **	2 *	5
1986	0	2 @	1 @	3
1987	1	0	1	2
1988	0	0	0	0
1989	0	0	0	0

@ = appointment was made, two (@@) indicates two appointments were made
* = incumbent was defeated, refers to defeats at the polls or simultaneous resignation

APPENDIX C

POLITICAL VALUES INSTRUMENT

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE IMPORTANT EDUCATION POLICY PROBLEMS IN YOUR DISTRICT?

Indicate your views by placing an "x" on the line nearer to the phrase in each pair that you feel is more important. Mark the space closest to the end of the line if that item is <u>much</u> more important than the other; mark the next space if it is <u>somewhat</u> more important; and mark the space close to the center of the line if it is only a <u>little</u> more important.

INCREASING PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY	___:___:___::___:___:___	MAKING PROGRAMS MORE COST-EFFECTIVE
IMPROVING THE USE OF EDUCATION TAX DOLLAR	___:___:___::___:___:___	GREATER EQUALIZATION OF RESOURCES
MORE EFFICIENT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	___:___:___::___:___:___	PROVIDING MORE CHOICES FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN
MAKING PROGRAMS MORE COST-EFFECTIVE	___:___:___::___:___:___	SETTING HIGHER ACADEMIC STANDARDS
REDUCING RESTRICTIONS ON BLDG EXPENDITURES	___:___:___::___:___:___	IMPROVING THE USE OF EDUCATION TAX DOLLARS
INCREASING PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY	___:___:___::___:___:___	GIVING MORE ATTENTION TO SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN
INCREASING THE LEVEL OF FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS	___:___:___::___:___:___	GREATER EQUALIZATION OF RESOURCES
BROADER PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING	___:___:___::___:___:___	MORE EFFICIENT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT
GIVING MORE ATTENTION TO SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN	___:___:___::___:___:___	SETTING HIGHER ACADEMIC STANDARDS
REDUCING RESTRICTIONS ON BLDG EXPENDITURES	___:___:___::___:___:___	INCREASE THE LEVEL OF FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS
DEVELOPING QUALITY CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP	___:___:___::___:___:___	PROVIDING MORE CHOICES FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN
SETTING HIGHER ACADEMIC STANDARDS	___:___:___::___:___:___	INCREASING PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY
GREATER EQUALIZATION OF RESOURCES	___:___:___::___:___:___	REDUCING RESTRICTIONS ON BLDG EXPENDITURES
PROVIDING MORE CHOICES FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN	___:___:___::___:___:___	BROADER PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING
MORE EFFICIENT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	___:___:___::___:___:___	DEVELOPING QUALITY CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP
GIVING MORE ATTENTION TO SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN	___:___:___::___:___:___	MAKING PROGRAMS MORE COST EFFECTIVE
IMPROVING THE USE OF EDUCATION TAX DOLLARS	___:___:___::___:___:___	INCREASING THE LEVEL OF FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS
DEVELOPING QUALITY CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP	___:___:___::___:___:___	BROADER PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

APPENDIX D

Value Consensus Among the Valley School Boards

	Riverton		Willow Springs		Leafy Rivers	
Policy Area	1972 (N=2)	1988 (N=5)	1972 (N=3)	1988 (N=5)	1972 (N=4)	1988 (N=5)
Program						
Eff v Equ	Eff			Equ*	Equ-SA	Equ-SA*
Eff v Qua	Qua	Qua-SA	Qua	Qua*		Qua*
Eff v Cho	Eff	Cho-SA	Eff*	Cho-SA*	Cho-SA	
Equ v Qua	Qua					Equ-SA*
Equ v Cho					Cho-SA	
Qua v Cho	Qua		Qua		Cho-SA	
	NOT Equ		NOT Cho	NOT Eff	NOT Eff	NOT Eff
	NOT Cho					
Finance						
Eff v Equ	Eff	Eff-SA			Eff-SA	Eff-SA*
Eff v Qua		Qua-SA	Eff*	Eff-SA*		
Eff v Cho	Eff	Eff-SA	Eff*	Eff*	Eff-SA	Eff-SA*
Equ v Qua		Qua-SA	Equ		Equ-SA	Qua-SA*
Equ v Cho	Equ			Equ-SA*	Equ-SA	Equ
Qua v Cho	Qua	Qua*	Cho		Qua-SA	Qua
	NOT Cho		NOT Qua		NOT Cho	NOT Cho
Governance						
Eff v Equ	Eff		Eff		Equ-SA	
Eff v Qua	Eff	Qua*				Qua-SA*
Eff v Cho	Eff	Eff-SA	Eff*		Eff-SA	
Equ v Qua	Qua			Qua	Equ-SA	Qua-SA*
Equ v Cho	Cho					
Qua v Cho	Qua	Qua	Qua*			
	NOT Equ		NOT Cho	Qua		

SA = Substantial agreement (four out of five) of school board members

* = Current superintendent selected value (1972 Superintendent data was not available for Leafy Rivers and Riverton

The values listed indicate unanimous agreement of board members. In 1988 this represents all five members. For the 1972 data, four of the five members were available in Willow Springs and Leafy Rivers, only two could be located for Riverton. In the case of values that were selected against, the stated value represents substantial agreement.

APPENDIX E

Policies Implemented

Political Values				
Policy Area	**Efficiency**	**Quality**	**Equity**	**Choice**
Organization		reorganization comprehensive staff develop-ment	community goal setting decentralization	
Personnel		accountability in evaluation professional development	hiring teams	collegial negotiations
Program			variety for low performers	variety for low performers alternative elementary middle school
Finance			decentralization	decentralization building-based management
Curriculum		adoption cycle increased resources		
Student Assessment	state-mandated	curriculum-based assessment		curriculum-based assessment
Facilities	preventative maintenance	building bonds passed		long-range building plans